

# Johnson Sidesteps Query On Humphrey's Future

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A pledge to try again next year for congressional enactment of open-housing legislation was made yesterday by President Johnson. However, Mr. Johnson left unanswered a question on the political future of Vice President Humphrey.

"I don't think I would get into that," he said, when asked to comment on Humphrey's weekend statement that Mr. Johnson had strongly indicated he wanted him as his running mate.

Civil rights and the Vice Presidency were but two of the topics in a wide-ranging press conference held in a Cabinet Room stripped of its regular furniture.

Mr. Johnson, who announced in advance he would be at yesterday's regular morning briefing, puzzled reporters at the outset with the statement that he had no announcements to make.

He did not spring his real news—the shift of Attorney

General Nicholas deB. Katzenbach to the State Department's No. 2 job—until a question on the subject came up when the session was 18 minutes old.

Most questions drew a negative response and the President appeared frequently to be holding his temper in check. He told one reporter who pressed him on the subject of Vietnam war costs to do "some home work. Read the hearings."

One subject on which he did declare himself positively was the civil rights bill killed by a Senate filibuster this week. The bill died when an effort to cut off debate fell 10 votes short of the necessary two-thirds majority.

Mr. Johnson chose to look on the bright side of the picture. He said he was "very happy that a majority of both houses have supported the measure that we recommended. I believe in due time that measure will again be

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with West German Chancellor Erhard would produce an agreement that would, as the questioner put it, put a German "finger on a nuclear trigger."

• Said he was "still hopeful" about prospects of U.S.-Soviet agreement on a treaty to limit military weapons in outer space

On domestic affairs, the President:

• Dismissed as a "partisan statement" the "white paper" issued Monday by House

Republican leaders criticizing his candor about and conduct of the Vietnam war.

• Said he was not sure he could campaign in all 50 states this fall but wanted to visit "every state we can."

spur Vietnam peace talks, but said "we have no indication" that the North Vietnamese "are interested in sitting down and talking."

• Said he had "felt all along" that Russia wanted such talks and would do its best to get them started.

• Said the military commanders in Vietnam "feel very good" about the progress of operations but declined to speculate on a windup date for the war.

• Discounted the possibility that his forthcoming talks

considered, favorably acted upon and will become the law of the land."

Asked if he would submit a civil rights bill with open-housing provisions to Congress next year, the President said "you can be reasonably sure if no action is concluded between now and the State of the Union message, that I will have recommendations in that field."

The question on Humphrey's future was based on an interview the Vice President had in St. Louis last Saturday. In it, he quoted the President as telling a group of labor leaders at the White House on Aug. 31, "As long as I'm President, I want him (Humphrey) by my side."

Humphrey was asked whether that meant another nomination as Vice President or possibly a Cabinet post. He said, "I have reason to believe

he meant the Vice Presidency."

When reporter Hugh Sidey of Time attempted to put the same question to Mr. Johnson yesterday, the President interrupted and said, "I don't think that I would get into that, Hugh. I would just let you go on and debate."

Though few politicians in either party believe Humphrey will be dumped, Mr. Johnson's disinclination to answer the question seemed likely to raise some questions about his intentions.

Most observers, however, doubted that it reflected anything more than the President's characteristic reluctance to commit himself in advance to any course of action.

The same caution characterized the answers to most of the briefing questions.

In foreign policy, Mr. Johnson:

• Welcomed the initiatives by Pope Paul VI and U.N. Secretary General U Thant to